

THE RETREAT TO APPOMATTOX.

On 2 April, 1865, a most terrific bombardment from one end of the line to the other commenced. At the same time the enemy's infantry surged forward like a mighty wave, and rolled up to our works. As one line recoiled from our deadly fire another would take its place, as though determined to break through by sheer weight of numbers. Our little band, so much exhausted from hard fighting and superhuman exertions, was compelled to fall back in the direction of Appomattox river. Following the river by the most accessible roads, we reached Amelia Court House, thirty-eight miles from where we started. Here General Lee expected to find a quantity of supplies for his troops, but, by an inexcusable blunder of the Richmond authorities the cars passed by without stopping to unload the supplies. We then had been two days without any food, and not a ration to be had. Our disappointment was complete, for the condition we were left in was desperate, and for some time we were wrapped in disconsolate silence. But for this blunder, General Lee could have preserved his army intact and passed Burkeville in safety before the enemy could have reached there. On the night of the 5th we left Amelia Court House, marching by way of Deatonville in the direction of Farmville. Upon reaching Sailor's creek, and after some desperate fighting and losing some of our best men, we moved on to Gettersville, a distance of four miles, much jaded, footsore, and half starved, and soon became engaged in another desperate fight, in which our lamented Captain A. H. Martin, commanding this regiment, fell instantly killed, while gallantly holding his men to the front. When the enemy reached his dead body, they had it decently interred, and wrote upon an envelop, placing it upon the grave, "Here lies the body of a brave man, Captain Martin, of the Fifty-fourth North Carolina." In this battle our regiment lost more than three-fourths of its men in killed, wounded and prisoners, after which the remnant moved on to Farmville, and found that the enemy had just taken a battery in our front and had in possession our only line of retreat. General Lee at this crit-